

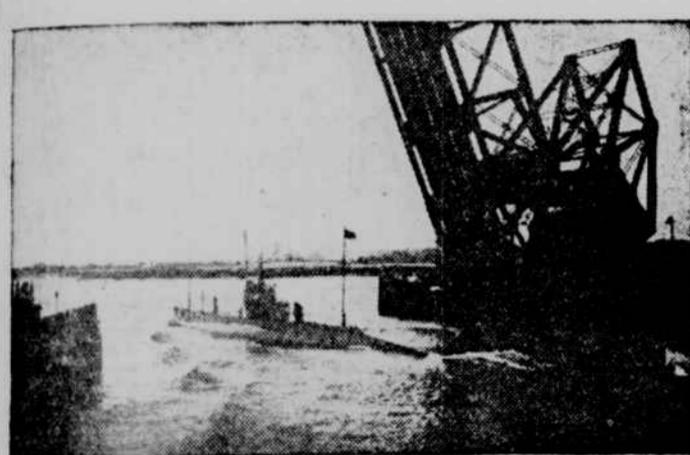
IN TIME OF WAR PREPARE FOR PEACE

Add to Our Means of Defence and Increase Internal Revenue, a Naval Expert Suggests, by Improving the Country's Intracoastal Waterways.

By J. W. MILLER

Late Lieut. Comd'r, U. S. N.

The reversal of the old adage, "In time of peace prepare for war," is justified. The United States may not be engaged in actual warfare, yet, the whole world to-day being so closely knit together, hostilities in Europe are affected to an alarming extent the present and future destiny of this country. We on this side of the Atlantic are both benefiting and suffering with the rest of humanity. Whether or not we may be driven into actual conflict is still an open question. At present, however, we are free from the inertia and rancor always existing between belligerents. We are therefore in a position to shape our policy, namely, to perfect our means of defence, and to prepare the way commercially for a larger sphere of action and influence looking toward same re-



PART OF THE INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY.

shipment between us and all nations when peace happily arrives.

If the word "preparedness" in its largest sense means anything at all, it must include the ability to meet all the world-wide problems facing us in the near future. The financial situation to-day is and at the close of hostilities will be such that the utmost economy must be used to face the situation when the war is over.

The limitations of a newspaper article prevent the discussion of such a large problem; my purpose is simply to present a concrete example, among many others, of what should deserve our immediate attention, namely, the improvement of certain of our waterways which will show a profit commercially and at the same time add materially to our means of defence.

Cooperation toward this desired end will follow if it can be shown to the pacifists, as well as to those who are crying for national security, that through such improvements results highly beneficial during times of peace, and incidentally meeting any war crisis, will accrue. If the dredging of harbors and deepening of rivers will develop trade and save lives, the West as well as the East will be in accord for such a broad national policy, and neutrality will abandon, at least for the moment, minor projects heretofore urged from narrow and political motives.

A study of the mental attitude of the country and of the recent activities affecting this subject may assist us, through a process of elimination, to some definite conclusion as to what work should be undertaken in the immediate future.

The shipyards on both seacoasts and the Great Lakes are to-day building over 100 vessels and refusing the same number for lack of capacity. The steamers of the Great Lakes are with difficulty relieving the congestion of the railroads, and proving, as heretofore, that water transportation is not only cheaper, but quicker, for crude material between two given terminals.

Canada has a carrying trade which should be taken by a finished Erie Canal. In this connection the peace advocates will undoubtedly admit that the joint traffic along the Great Lakes and through the adjacent channels has done more to preserve friendly relationship between the two portions of the Anglo-Saxon race facing one another for 5,000 miles than could ever have been accomplished by a series of frowning fortresses.

The various deeper waterways associations, originally formed to promote sectional interest, are to-day advocating a policy of sequence of work beginning with improvements beneficial to the whole country, rather than to portions thereof. From them we hear more of the deepened river than of the dredged tributary, where paving would accomplish better results than dredging.

Thousands of yachts are cruising during the summer, through Northern waterways, waiting for inland channels for winter trim between the Chesapeake and the Gulf. Their crews, and those of all pleasure craft, hardened by sea experience, will be available as a "naval reserve."

Ninety-five thousand cruising motor-boats along the Atlantic coast are potential factors for use in time of war. Their owners are ready to render service in the smooth waters for which their craft are fitted.

In this connection it is also interesting to note the psychological effect upon the rich, who, having made their money on land, are to-day spending it on the sea; thus they are obtaining a wider horizon of thought, an appreciation of the value of ocean commerce and regaining the sea spirit of their ancestors.

those that can more or less safely wait, confining our attention to the ones of immediate necessity.

Before discussing them it is well to note, first, that no nation is best, as we are, with such numerous deep harbors as those along our eastern shores. These harbors are a source of commercial power, but of defensive weakness. Interior communication between them is especially needful in time of war. They need little improvement, but even that little should be done in the order of their value to the country at large from a military point of view.

Second, there remain the undeveloped or partially improved channels extending for 2,000 miles along the Atlantic shore, and defended by the natural rampart of land and beach lying between them and the ocean. The

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and Gay Head, and from Provincetown northward, give a means of defense comparable, in a larger way, to the barbed wire entanglements of western France. A fleet of submarines, torpedo boat destroyers, converted yachts and war equipped motor boats might at least delay the enemy while the land forces assemble, over the railroads parallel to Long Island Sound, for the defense of our populous eastern states.

We would therefore seem to have arrived at the conclusion that, from the point of view of military preparedness, the portion of our coast from New York to Boston should be the first to

receive our attention. The inside route will then permit the shifting of vessels of the largest draft from east to west over a distance of 254 miles instead of 400 miles by the Nantucket route, where they will face the dangers of the sea and a possible enemy.

The above are but a few examples showing that the time is ripe for a renewal of sea power and the development of secondary lines of defense as "feeders" by water, to enlarged ports. The two subjects cannot be divorced.

The question next arises—What portion of our intracoastal channels should first demand our attention? Ultimately all the existing chain of waters parallel to the Atlantic must be united, each link connecting important marine centers. The present demands upon our treasury will not, however, permit to-day such a large outlay; even the vast resources of a rich country are unequal to meet such heavy expenses. We must pass by

New Jersey is about to render its assistance by bearing some of the expense of deepening the canal between the Hudson and the Delaware.

The President has given his sanction to the improvement of Hell Gate so that "capital" ships can use Long Island Sound for quick transit between our principal navy yard and Newport. Such an improvement will also enable commercial vessels at all times and of all drafts to take advantage of the double entrance and exit to and from New York Harbor. The neglect of creating this deeper channel at this critical moment amounts almost to a military crime.

If our Treasury cannot at the moment provide the funds for the New Jersey canal, and the one connecting the Delaware with the Chesapeake, then we should begin at New York and work eastward, for it is a well known fact that our war colleges consider Sandy Hook, Narragansett Bay and Providence town the most vulnerable localities.

A few occupying any one of them could collect any indemnity which might be desired from the richest portion of our country. Therefore the crying need for instant action lies along the locality from New York to the eastward. The shoals dredged at the western end of Long Island Sound, we have a deep marine trench extending to the upper reaches of Buzzard's Bay.

We find there that a private corporation has dug a channel twenty-five feet deep, and if this were dredged to an additional depth of fifteen feet our marine trench from New York to Boston would be complete.

The question of improved waterways

and took Philadelphia. Eventually French ships and Washington drove the British fleet from our shores. In the War of 1812 there was no Washington to lead the raw militia, and our Capitol was burned. The lack of quick transportation both by land and water was partially the cause of our reverses during the second war with England. In 1898 the report that the Spanish fleet was about to attack us caused an exodus of people as well as money from our Eastern cities toward the interior. History, therefore, proves that quick transportation and improved coastal channels may spell victory instead of defeat in the future.

It may be admitted, however, that both time and money prevent the improvement of the whole of this chain of waterways. If so, let us at least make a beginning on that portion where a trivial outlay gives the quickest results both for commerce and defense, and enlarge the present routes between Philadelphia and Boston.

The commercial necessity of smooth, shorter routes along our coast, in order to avoid the dangers of Hatteras and Cape Cod, is of even more importance. The loss of life and property in those storm ridden regions is about a million dollars per annum. The coastwise commerce should avoid especially the intricate Vineyard Haven route, where fog and storm are constant and delays to shipping great.

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